United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

90th PLENARY MEETING

9 March 1994
at 10.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Frechette (Canada), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Agenda item 127 ***(continued)***

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/48/853/Rev.1.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs me that further to his letters dated 21 January 1994 and 14 February 1994 he is transmitting a revised list of Member States that are in arrears under the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of that information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 ***(continued)***

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Tenth report of the General Committee (A/48/250/Add.9)

The President: I draw the attention of representatives to the tenth report of the General Committee, which has been circulated as document A/48/250/Add.9.

The report concerns a request by Uganda for the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Emergency assistance to Uganda".

The General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item be included in the agenda. May I take it that the Assembly decides to include this additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting. May I take it that the Assembly adopts this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: If there is no objection, may I also take it that, as requested by the sponsor, the item should be given priority for consideration by the Assembly this morning, because of its urgent character?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly will thus consider the item on emergency assistance to Uganda as the last item of this morning's meeting.

I should like to inform members that this new item becomes item 178 of the agenda of the forty-eighth session

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of the General Assembly and that the documents reflecting its inclusion and allocation will be issued tomorrow.

I should also like to inform members that a draft resolution on emergency assistance to Uganda will be available shortly in the General Assembly Hall as document A/48/L.54.

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 12 (Report of the Economic and Social Council): note by the Secretary-General (A/48/896)

The President: In his note the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that by resolution 1993/77 of 30 July 1993 the Economic and Social Council recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Target for World Food Programme pledges for the period 1995-1996". This resolution is reproduced in document A/48/896.

I should also like to refer to a letter from the Chairman of the Second Committee dated 7 March 1994 addressed to the President of the General Assembly drawing to his attention the need to take action on the recommendation by the Economic and Social Council.

In order for the General Assembly to take action on that recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, which it had inadvertently omitted when it considered other recommendations of the Council, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

The President: The pertinent chapter of the report of the Economic and Social Council is chapter IV, entitled "Operational activities segment of the Council", paragraphs 24 and 25.

Representatives are aware that this chapter of the report of the Economic and Social Council was allocated to the Second Committee. However, in order for the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on this matter, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council directly in this plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of the draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council, the text of which, for ease of reference, is reproduced in document A/48/896?

As I see no objection, we will proceed accordingly.

Since there are no speakers, the Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Target for World Food Programme pledges for the period 1995-1996" referred to in chapter IV, paragraph 25, of the report of the Economic and Social Council and reproduced in document A/48/896.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 48/235).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 17 (f) (Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission): note by the Secretary-General (A/48/106/Add.1)

The President: In his note the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that he has received notification of the resignation of Mr. Valery F. Keniaykin of the Russian Federation from membership of the International Civil Service Commission and that the Assembly will therefore be required at its current session to appoint a person to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office of Mr. Keniaykin. I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to a mistake in the text of document A/48/106/Add.1. At the end of paragraph 1, the term of office should read "31 December 1996".

In order to enable the General Assembly to take the required action, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 17 (f), entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission". May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of sub-item (f)?

It was so decided.

The President: Representatives are aware that this sub-item is usually allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that representatives agree that, in view of time constraints, the appointment should be made directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: In his note contained in document A/48/106/Add.1, the Secretary-General also informs the Assembly that the Government of the Russian Federation has nominated Mr. Alexander V. Chepourin to fill this vacancy.

I therefore propose that the Assembly proceed immediately to the appointment of a member of the International Civil Service Commission.

As I see no objection, we will proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to appoint Mr. Alexander V. Chepourin as a member of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on 9 March 1994 and ending on 31 December 1996?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 17 (f)?

It was so decided.

Introduction of reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 132 (a), 134, 136, 137 and 149. I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Kabir (Bangladesh), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on five agenda items concerning United Nations peace-keeping operations: namely, the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) and the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

On agenda item 132 (a), entitled "United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/48/815/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 134, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/48/817/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Fifth Committee's report on agenda item 136, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force" is contained in document A/48/819/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 137, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/48/820/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, with regard to agenda item 149, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique", the Fifth Committee's report is contained in document A/48/821/Add.1. In paragraph 5 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Those five decisions were adopted by the Fifth Committee at its 49th meeting, on Friday, 4 March 1994. The Fifth Committee recommends their adoption to the General Assembly.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

"When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 132 ***(continued)***

Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991):

(a) United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission: report of the Fifth Committee (A/48/815/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 132.

Agenda item 134 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador: report of the Fifth Committee (A/48/817/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 134.

Agenda item 136 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force: report of the Fifth Committee (A/48/819/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 137 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II: report of the Fifth Committee (A/48/820/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 149 ***(continued)***

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique: report of the Fifth Committee (A/48/821/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of part II of its report.

The draft decision was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 149.

Agenda item 178

Emergency assistance to Uganda: draft resolution (A/48/L.54)

The President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier, the Assembly will now consider agenda item 178.

In view of the desire of the sponsor to dispose of this item expeditiously, I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.54. In this connection, since the draft resolution has just been circulated, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure. I should like, however, to remind members that the text of the draft resolution appeared in document A/48/248.

Rule 78 reads as follows:

"As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure.

It was so decided.

The President: I now call on the representative of Burkina Faso to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.54.

Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): I introduce the draft resolution (A/48/L.54) on behalf of the Member States of the African Group.

An earthquake measuring 6.2 magnitude on the Richter scale that occurred on 6 February 1994 destroyed three significant districts in Uganda. The disaster, which took place at a time when Uganda was seeking ways and means of recovering from other plagues, has compounded Uganda's difficulties. Once again, many families in the country are suffering upheavals, the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their environment. As we are now meeting, the Ugandan Government, in the discharge of its responsibilities, has already taken the first necessary steps to deal with this situation. The magnitude of the damage, according to initial estimates, affects basic infrastructure and exceeds Uganda's current real capacity to deal with it.

The draft resolution, therefore, appeals to the international community for solidarity with Uganda.

It is balanced in format, with six preambular and six operative paragraphs. The preambular part expresses deep concern at the damage caused by the earthquake and recognizes the efforts already made by the Government and people of Uganda to respond to the crisis.

In operative paragraph 1, the General Assembly would declare its solidarity with the Government and people of Uganda in this tragic situation.

Operative paragraph 3 would commend the international community, including the Department for Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, for the measures taken thus far in response to the disaster.

Paragraph 4 would request the Secretary-General to continue to assist the Government and people of Uganda in providing relief and bringing recovery efforts to a successful conclusion.

Paragraph 5 seems to us to be the key one: it would request all States and international organizations urgently to provide relief assistance to the victims of the disaster and to provide additional support to Uganda to enable the country to shoulder the additional socio-economic and financial burden resulting from the earthquake.

Operative paragraph 6 would request the Secretary-General to report to the Economic and Social Council at its 1994 substantive session on the implementation of the present resolution.

That, then, is the draft resolution before the Assembly in document A/48/L.54. On behalf of the African Group, I hope that the spirit of solidarity that has always been a feature of the international community in such circumstances will once again be displayed and that the Assembly will adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Karukubiro Kamunanwire (Uganda): As has already been stated, at 2.45 a.m. on 6 February 1994, a devastating earthquake of a magnitude of 6.2 on the Richter Scale struck Bundibugyo, Kasese and Kabarole districts in western Uganda. Until the beginning of March, the three districts remained traumatized by mother nature's unrelenting aftershocks and tremors. At the end of it all, eight persons were dead and many wounded. The major preoccupation now is concern for the thousands who have been made homeless. Their plight is further aggravated by

additional risks of natural calamities and hazards to health and the environment.

In terms of material damage, the earthquake indiscriminately ravaged schools, hospitals and health centres, administrative and commercial units, places of worship, Government buildings, cultural sites and private property. Information on the extent of damage to the infrastructure is still incomplete, but it is feared to be substantial. The latest data on the cost of damage in a single district, Kabarole, is $60 million. This by far exceeds the initial estimate of $59 million for all the three districts.

In an effort to ensure a concerted response to the crisis, the Government of Uganda moved quickly to establish coordination committees in the three affected districts. These committees, which are headed by the respective District Administrators under the overall coordination of the Department of Disaster Relief and Resettlement in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, serve as channels for emergency relief assistance.

In addition to emergency relief assistance, the Government has provided $500,000 for building materials. These materials will be distributed free of charge to the poorest affected persons and subsidized for all others. Non-governmental organizations such as the Uganda Red Cross and OXFAM, as well as church organizations, continue to be instrumental partners in this effort.

My country's capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to this unexpected disaster has been undermined by the economic and financial difficulties that Uganda faces as a least developed country. As part of our efforts at structural economic reform and of the fight against inflation, the Government has been operating on a tight cash-flow budget, making it difficult to provide for sudden tragedies. To aggravate this bleak situation, Uganda's fragile socio-economic infrastructure has in recent times been further burdened by the massive influx of refugees from our neighbours in Zaire, the Sudan and Rwanda - whom we have had no choice but to accommodate. The most recent example was the influx of 110,000 refugees from the Sudan that occurred late last February. There is no sign that this tide will soon be stopped or reversed.

It is clear from what I have said that my country does not have the capacity to handle the present emergency in addition to the refugee problems without significant external support. We therefore appeal to the international community to come to our assistance. We call upon all Members of this Organization to lend unanimous support to the draft resolution before the Assembly and to accompany that manifestation of solidarity with concrete assistance.

Permit me to express the gratitude of my delegation to the African Group for its solidarity with the people of Uganda in this affliction. We are grateful to all countries and organizations that have supported our efforts and are responding to the crisis. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Italy. Italy has not only financed the airlift of United Nations supplies from the warehouse in Pisa, but has also contributed $294,176 for emergency assistance.

My delegation would be remiss if it failed to commend the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which is responding promptly and effectively to my Government's request for assistance in the areas of damage assessment, provision of relief and coordination of donor activities.

As the draft resolution indicates, in addition to relief and rehabilitation, it is necessary to address the long-term development assistance needs of the region, particularly in the context of the environmental impact of the earthquake. The earthquake will have significant ramifications for major economic activities of the three districts: agriculture, mining and tourism. In a cruel twist of fate, the timing of the earthquake was just before the rains. It will therefore not only interfere with the planting season, but will also render the region susceptible to mudslides, adversely affecting food security, agricultural productivity and resettlement efforts. Immediate contingency measures therefore need to be put in place to avoid any further catastrophe.

The site of the earthquake, the Rwenzori Mountains, whose incomparably beautiful mist-shrouded ice peaks have earned them the legendary title of the "Mountains of the Moon", are a major tourist attraction. The Kibale Forest National Park and the famous hot springs of Mount Rwenzori National Park have contributed significantly to Uganda's biodiversity and have promoted the tourist industry, which is now a vital source of foreign exchange for the country. In addition, therefore, to the excruciating burden of rehabilitation and recovery, Uganda will face a loss of income from the tourist industry. We therefore hope that the donor response will address immediate relief requirements as well as longer-term recovery and development needs.

The misfortune faced by my country highlights the importance of national capacity building in the area of disaster preparedness, especially in developing countries. In the light of the fact that the area affected by the disaster is earthquake-prone, the Ugandan Government is using this painful experience as a lesson in capacity building in the field of disaster preparedness. In that connection, we are grateful to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for its

positive response to Uganda's request for an earthquake engineer and a seismologist to advise on reconstruction and to contribute to efforts to enhance our national disaster-preparedness capacity.

Let me conclude this statement by reiterating Uganda's appeal for support from the United Nations system and the international community, through the provision of emergency relief assistance to the victims of the earthquake, especially in the form of financial, technical and logistical support for recovery and reconstruction, as well as for long-term development assistance to the region.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.54. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt that draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 48/236).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 178?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.